

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 SSC-01 IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /074 W
-----121602Z 018865 /46

R 121435Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4417
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: PERES ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY; CENTER PARTIEZIARE ACTIVE

1. AS EXPECTED, DEFENSE MINISTER SHIMON PERES ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT IN A TV INTERVIEW THAT HE WOULD CHALLENGE PRIME MINISTER RABIN FOR THE TOP SPOT ON THE LABOR PARTY KNESSET LIST. PERES INDICATED THAT, IF SUCCESSFUL, HE WOULD REDUCE THE NUMBER OF MINISTRIES AND BRING YOUNG PEOPLE AND A WOMAN INTO THE CABINET. HE WOULD ALSO BE WILLING TO INCLUDE RABIN AND ABBA EBAN IN HIS GOVERNMENT AND SAID, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, THAT AS PRIME MINISTER HE WOULD NOT RETAIN THE DEFENSE PORTFOLIO.

2. PERES' MOVE FOLLOWED A DECISION BY THE IHUD, THE ORGANIZATION OF MAPAI COLLECTIVE SETTLEMENTS AND AN IMPORTANT FORCE IN THE LABOR PARTY, NOT TO OPPOSE COMPETITION IN THE PARTY FOR THE PREMIERSHIP. AT THE SAME TIME IHUD DECIDED NOT TO ENDORSE ANYONE FOR THE TOP SPOT ON LABOR'S LIST-- PROBABLY A DISAPPOINTMENT FOR RABIN.

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3. ON ANOTHER STAGE, THERE IS ACTIVITY AMONG LIBERAL-CENTER PARTIES BENT ON MERGING OR BLOC-FORMING. THE GENERAL PICTURE IS ONE OF THE ESTABLISHED CENTER GROUPS WOOING YIGAEEL YADIN, BUT BEING REBUFFED BY HIS SOMEWHAT EXORBITANT DEMAND THAT SUITORS MUST "JOIN" HIS DEOMCRATIC MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE (DMC) AS INDIVIDUALS AFTER FIRST

DISSOLVING THEIR OWN PARTY AND RESIGNING THEIR KNESSET SEATS.

4. INDEPENDENT MK BINYAMIN HALEVY, WHO BOLTED THE LIKUD LAST YEAR, HAS INDICATED THAT HE WILL JOIN THE DMC. PRE-SUMABLY, HE WILL RESIGN HIS SEAT. HOWEVER, RECENT TALKS BETWEEN THE DMC AND SHULAMIT ALONI'S CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT (CRM) BROKE UP OVER THE LATTER'S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT YADIN'S TERMS FOR MERGING.

5. THERE ARE ALSO DISCUSSIONS AMONG SEVERAL OF THE LIBERAL-CENTER GROUPS WITH A VIEW TO FORMING A GROUPING TO COMPETE WITH THE DMC. CRM AND ILP LEADERS HAVE CONFERRED THIS WEEK ON A POSSIBLE MERGER, AND THE ILP'S MOSHE KOL IS ALSO CURRENTLY MEETING WITH THE FREE CENTER'S SHMUEL TAMIR ON THE SUBJECT.

6. COMMENT: A MAJOR PART OF YADIN'S APPEAL IS HIS FRESHNESS AND LACK OF IDENTIFICATION WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT. HE DOES NOT WANT TO COMPROMISE THIS IMAGE BY ALIGNING WITH EXISTING PARTIES. AT THE MOMENT YADIN CAN AFFORD TO PLAY HARD-TO-GET; MOST OBSERVERS (CONFIRMED BY POLLS) GIVE HIM A COMMANDING LEAD OVER ANY OTHER CENTER PARTY. PROTECTING THIS LEAD WILL BE HIS MAJOR CHALLENGE IN THE

CAMPAIGN AHEAD. MOREOVER, THE OUTCOME OF PERES' CHALLENGE TO RABIN WILL UNDOUBTEDLY AFFECT YADIN'S PROSPECTS. IT IS BELIEVED THAT A LABOR PARTY LIST HEADED BY PERES AND OTHER NEW FACES COULD BRING BACK MANY DISENCHANTED LABOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VOTERS WHO NOW APPEAR ATTRACTED TO ISRAEL'S "MR. CLEAN."
DUNNIGAN

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION CANDIDATES, NATIONAL ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TELAV00259
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770011-1274
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770157/aaaabxxv.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c54670da-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3611115
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PERES ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY; CENTER PARTIEZIARE ACTIVE
TAGS: PINT, IS, (PERES, SHIMON), (YADIN, YIGAEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c54670da-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009